

Mayor's Commission on the American Recovery & Reinvestment Plan

Friday, February 20, 2009, 3:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, Government Center
200 East Main Street, Lexington, Kentucky

Members Present:

Mayor Jim Newberry (via teleconference call)	Kathy Plomin
Tim Bennett	Dave Riggins (for Rocky Burke)
David Cozart	Melinda Rowe
Jim Gray	Mary Wright
Peggy Henson	Kevin Stinnett
Lisa Higgins-Hord	Cheryl Taylor
Joe Kelly	Tyrone Tyra
Ed Lane	Mike Webb
	Susan Westrom

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Joe Kelly. Dr. Melinda Rowe, Fayette County Health Department, and Mary Wright, Fayette County Schools, were introduced as new members of the commission.

Report on White House Update:

Mayor Newberry and Len Simon joined the meeting by teleconference call. The Mayor reported on details of his visit in Washington, DC with President Obama, Vice-President Biden, key cabinet secretaries and administrative personnel. The Mayor indicated that new information is unfolding rapidly each day. Two themes emerged from these meeting: (1) there is a clear understanding from these key leaders of issues affecting urban areas; and (2) the importance of transparency and accountability for the money we receive and the projects we pursue.

The Mayor gave a short briefing from the meetings with the President's cabinet secretaries:

Justice Department: There are significant dollars in the COPS program, dollars that will be out on the street very quickly—funding forms available March 16. Byrne grant money is on a faster track—formula grant forms will be out after March 1.

Education Department: They are looking for ideas to raise the educational system all over the country, ways to recruit and retain teachers and administrators, and discussed an interesting component—revitalizing cities.

HUD: Public housing assistance funding and foreclosure prevention programs were discussed, which will be of interest to Lexington.

Transportation: Significant dollars will be coming through for Lextran capital and approximately \$7.8 million for highways for Lexington-Fayette County and the MPO. Secretary LaHood emphasized the reappropriation process, which will be another opportunity for us, on which Len Simon and Rep. Chandler are already working.

The President's theme focused on the need to do this right. With the passing of this stimulus act making funds available, mayors must make sure to spend funds wisely and carefully, putting in place safeguards, which could be a major challenge. Mayor Newberry said the major emphasis for our commission is to figure out how to balance competing interests, quickly spending the money, and good management of resources.

Rep. Westrom stressed that we must be mindful of expanding programs for the three years of federal funding that could saddle us as funding runs out, having to then budget through the general fund—i.e. COPS program. The Mayor stated that Lexington will have to commit to keep these new hires on the payroll after the 3 years of 100% federal funding.

Mayor Newberry, noted there are a dozen federal agencies with their stimulus dollars, some available through formulas and some through competitive applications. The Commission must determine our best shot to obtain money where we are competing. Our charge is to set accountability for funds and monitor what is going on.

Len Simon addressed the question of how can citizens access information at a federal level. He stressed that our Commission meetings were most educational, particularly as the program is forming. Transparency is imperative and all mayors will be required to certify that all information will be posted on a federal website—recovery.gov. Funds are built into these grants for required record keeping efforts. Mr. Simon then signed off saying he would have more information at next week's meeting.

Examples of Recovery Plan Issues

Members of the LFUCG leadership team summarized Len Simon's prepared overview to address issues and potential for opportunity and challenges for Lexington-Fayette County in various areas to stimulate ideas, issues and questions that commission members may have.

- (1) Tim Bennett - Commissioner of Public Safety--opportunities include COPS hiring, Byrne grants, fire station construction, reconstruction and relocation grants (FEMA), Alternative Fuel Vehicles Pilot Program (public safety is largest user of fuel in LFUCG)
- (2) Marlene Helm - Commissioner of Social Services--opportunities include possibility of new Senior Center facility, Neighborhood Place; Community Development Block Grants; employment and training opportunities
- (3) Anthony Wright - Economic Development Director--opportunities for workforce development; job training and employment opportunities for adults and youth

- (4) Rama Dhuwaraha - Chief Information Officer--Broadband Technology Opportunities Program--partner with University of Kentucky to expand network throughout Fayette County; the Health Information Technology for Clinical Health Act--presently coordinating with our local/regional hospitals on e-health initiatives
- (5) Cheryl Taylor - Environmental Quality Commissioner--presently have \$40 million in capital projects and can resubmit for grants; clean up brownfields; clean water grants and drinking water grants; purchase of new "green" vehicles; Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant--opportunities for changes in homes, recycling, landfills, new fuels, job creation, forestry
- (6) Mike Webb - Public Works Commissioner--3 main opportunities for Lexington through Transit Capital Assistance, Highway Infrastructure Program, Competitive Surface Transportation Program.

Joe Kelly concluded the meeting with some thoughts by David Cozart about coordination of effort and establishing a mechanism for this. Mr. Kelly advised that the website link will help, giving some type of tracking matrix to avoid duplication and lend accountability.

Mr. Kelly informed the Commission that the next meeting is 3:00 p.m., Friday, February 27 in the Phoenix Building, 3rd Floor Conference Room.

Adjournment:

Joe Kelly adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.